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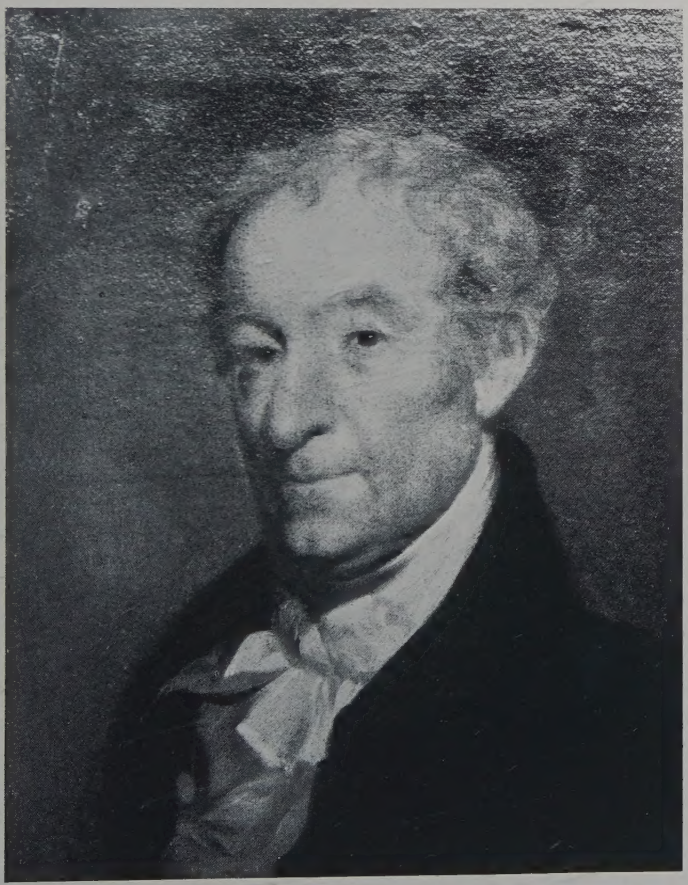

PORTRAIT OF GILBERT STUART by John Neagle

Gift of Isaac C. Bates, 1909

Entered as second-class matter January 16, 1913, at the post office at Providence, Rhode Island, under the Act of August 24, 1912

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THE 1936 TERCENTENARY EXHIBITION

THE Tercentenary Exhibition held in the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design during the months of February and March was of such interest and importance that this number of the Bulletin is dedicated as a record to it. Naturally, the emphasis was on the early contributions of the State to art, particularly representative as a showing of portraits by Gilbert Stuart, of furniture by Newport makers, especially selected pieces by members of the Goddard and Townsend families, and silver by Rhode Island silversmiths. No attempt was made to show all of the treasures in each of the above classes which are owned in the State, but nevertheless the exhibition was both varied and important. The rich material in Newport was not drawn upon, for its Tercentenary Exhibition will call attention to them during the coming July and August.

A detailed catalogue of the Exhibition at the Museum has been issued, and copies are available at the price of seventy-five cents. The Bulletin articles are necessarily brief, but call attention to an outstanding exhibition.

GILBERT STUART—THE MAN

RHODE Island contains many picturesque sections, but few that have as much claim to distinction as Old South County. This is not the place to set forth the many reasons why repeated pilgrimages or lengthy sojourns there bring their rewards; but there is one spot which everyone should know. In the Narragansett region, which is full of interest, there is a small stream, called in Indian tongue, the Mettatoxet, which finds its leisurely way into the Pettaquamscut. This may be difficult to find, but not if one remembers and asks for Gilbert Stuart's birthplace, which was built on the Mettatoxet. The original house was built in 1662. It was a combination of residence and snuff mill. The picture used shows the appearance of the house from up the river before the excellent restorations were made quite recently by Mr. Norman M. Isham, whose skill and archaeological lore may not be questioned. In its restored state it stands ready to welcome anyone who desires to know something of Stuart the man, in his early formative days.

But he was quite young when he left old Narragansett for wider horizons, and new fields to conquer. We are not concerned at the moment with what these were, or how he responded to the influences, conscious and unconscious, which were brought to bear; we are more interested in what manner of man he was and whatever will give us a visual impression of him.

It so happens that in this respect we are very fortunate. Not only do we have several verbal descriptions of him, but there exist in many places a series of portraits of him, some by his own hand, some by his contemporaries, which reveal the physical response of the man to his career, fortunes and the march of time. Naturally, it is the later portraits that interest us most, since these show him at a time when he was immortalizing with his brush the leaders in American life whose memories we cherish.

Of this series the one which is perhaps best known is the portrait painted by John Neagle, the original of which is now in the Boston Athenaeum Collection. But as was the custom of the day, certain replicas of this portrait were painted also by Neagle, one of which is in the Philadelphia Historical Society and another which was given to the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design by Mr. Isaac C. Bates in 1909.

Neagle painted his portrait of Stuart from life in Boston in 1825, at a time when Stuart was seventy and a recent sufferer from paralysis. Hence the right side of the face was turned away from the spectator. But the paralysis did not completely stop his painting, and some of Stuart's best work was done while he was under this handicap. This portrait never met with the approval of the Stuart family and his

daughter, Jane, did not feel that it did justice to her distinguished father.

The verbal descriptions vary in length and understanding. Some, like those from his relatives and pupils, have the greatest value as being far more sympathetic. As a successful painter he was skilled in handling his sitters; but being at the same time human, he would brook no interference from them. He evidently held his friends for many years as shown by existing letters. Tradition pays tribute to his powers as a conversationalist at banquets and gatherings. Evidently he knew his abilities as a painter and departed not one whit from the course he determined. His family found him a devoted father. In his business relations he was anything but careful, dispersing carelessly available funds, and never keeping any lists of his accounts or his sitters. This is admittedly quite different from the methods of many artists of his day, especially in England.

Regarding the portrait owned by the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, something should be said of its provenance, as this part of its history illustrates how family tradition may have but little relation to the truth, and must be taken with a grain of salt. In the early American days there lived an artist who was a painter and engraver by the name of Bass Otis. He was born in New England in 1784 and lived most of his life in Philadelphia, after working for some time in New York City. He painted a well-known portrait of John Neagle when he was nineteen and a pupil in Otis' studio. How Neagle's replica of his portrait of Stuart came into Otis' possession, is not yet revealed by history; but he did have it for a time in fact until he died in 1865. Then the portrait was given by his daughter to an artist who had boarded with the Otis family for some time. The artist was told by the Otis family that it was a portrait of Stuart, painted by himself, and curiously enough other artists of the day concurred in this legend. Furthermore, Stuart is supposed to have made a present of it to Bass Otis in person. It is impossible to say for just what part of the story Bass Otis was responsible, probably very little, for he must have been very familiar with Neagle and his two celebrated portraits of Stuart, painted from life.

But an artist's interpretation of a fellow artist perhaps stands the best chance of being characterized by sympathetic understanding, and hence we cherish the series of portraits named, and especially those from the gifted brush of John Neagle.

The Museum was also privileged in this exhibition to show a portrait of Gilbert Stuart which was made by Francis Elwell, which was lent to the Museum very kindly by the Pausacoco Lodge of South County. Elwell was a pupil of Daniel Chester French, who also studied in Paris. He was born in Concord, Mass. in 1858, and died in Darien, Conn. in 1922.

Although not as well-known as a good many other American sculptors, he was certainly a man of distinction and ability, and one of the problems which he undertook was the portrait of Gilbert Stuart, based on such information as was available at the time when it was made. Naturally, this was after Stuart's death, so possibly a certain amount of artistic freedom may be found in the portrait; but none the less it has a certain place of distinction among the portraits of Gilbert Stuart.

L. E. R.

GILBERT STUART, THE ARTIST

IN the Catalogue of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, London, where Stuart is represented, we read in the biographical notice there printed that Gilbert Stuart was a member of the "British School, born at Narragansett, Rhode Island, U. S. A., graduated at University of Glasgow, pupil of Benjamin West, exhibited in the Royal Academy from 1778 to 1785, worked in Paris. Returned in 1792 to America," etc. The claim that Stuart was a member of the British School is an interesting one, perhaps something like the similar claim that Sargent and Whistler were likewise members of the

British School, which also has been made, not without some degree of justice. Whether Stuart was one of the British School or not is certainly not a point to quibble over, but it is interesting that his genius and excellent work earned him the honor of being counted in both schools for he is primarily America's first great painter, and yet to be in competition with a rival. There is no need to repeat here the well-known facts of his life, but certain points warrant repetition. He was a pupil of Cosmo Alexander in this country and of Benjamin West in England. The opportunity which was his to hold an honored and successful place in the great school of Georgian painters, then at the height of its expression, had its influence on him; even more than his fellows did he interest himself in the methods and technique of his craft, and the best of his work can be compared favorably with the best of theirs, which is saying a great deal.

It is therefore natural and fitting that in the exhibition recently shown at the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, Stuart and his work should be selected for recognition and emphasis.

The selection placed on view was a small one compared to the 1159 odd which are now given to him on the best authority, the number shown being only twenty-eight, but in some respects the exhibition approached great distinction. In the first place the selection shown represented work of all three of his periods—English, Irish, and American, with naturally the emphasis placed upon the last phase, as being the longest and most productive. In the English and Irish portraits we find the tributes which Stuart paid to the Georgian ladies who sat for him, but apparently by far did he prefer the rich color and pageantry as

BIRTHPLACE OF GILBERT STUART

Before restoration

NARRAGANSETT, R. I.

shown in the uniforms then worn in the English army and navy. This is well shown in the portrait of "Constantine John Phipps, Baron Mulgrave," and that of "Sir William Molesworth."

But the height of his career was reached by Stuart in his American portraits. Ripened and refined by his European experiences, perfected in his technique as he was, his artistic nature fully sensitive to the individual types of his sitters, he found the new country ready to receive him, and he ready to do justice to his opportunities. A brilliant period of creative successes in New York City was followed by similar ones in Philadelphia, Washington and Boston. Among his sitters were statesmen and leaders of all kinds, merchants, army and navy commanders, and people of position. The outstanding figure among all of these was naturally George Washington, easily the first citizen of his day. It is to Stuart that we owe the truly great portraits of Washington that we have, granted of course that they tell of a man, already bowed by responsibility and political bickering. In the exhibition there are two of these portraits, one each of the well-known type. Through the great kindness of Mrs. Suydam Cutting the exhibition included the well-known one of the Vaughan type, which formerly belonged to Mr. Marsden J. Perry. It was a real pleasure to see this important portrait again in Providence, and available for the public to enjoy for a time. The other was the well-known Jonathan Mason portrait of Washington, created as an appreciative gift by the artist for courtesies and friendships received, and now the property of the Museum.

But in Stuart's career his genius also did full justice to the group of remarkable women of his day who had their share in the trials and successes of the Revolution, and so loyally supported their men. Here we meet and pay respects to Mrs. Richard Yates of New York City, Mrs. James Smith Colburn, and Mrs. John Gore of Boston, of more youthful age and charming in red shawl, as a color note. Also Miss Weems of Maryland, and in particular the delightful and little known Dorothy Willing of Philadelphia.

The exhibition also attempted to bring together as many as possible of unfinished Stuart portraits, that the students and the public might the more appreciate the artist's genius. Here was the vivacious Mrs. Perez Morton, a portrait found in Stuart's studio at his death, and generously lent by the Worcester Art Museum. Likewise the portrait of Washington Allston, whose own contribution to American art was indeed great, a sympathetic portrayal by the skilled brush of a fellow craftsman, and lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Or again we found the sketchy but delightful self-portrait in oil which he made for Mrs. Stuart, a gem also lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

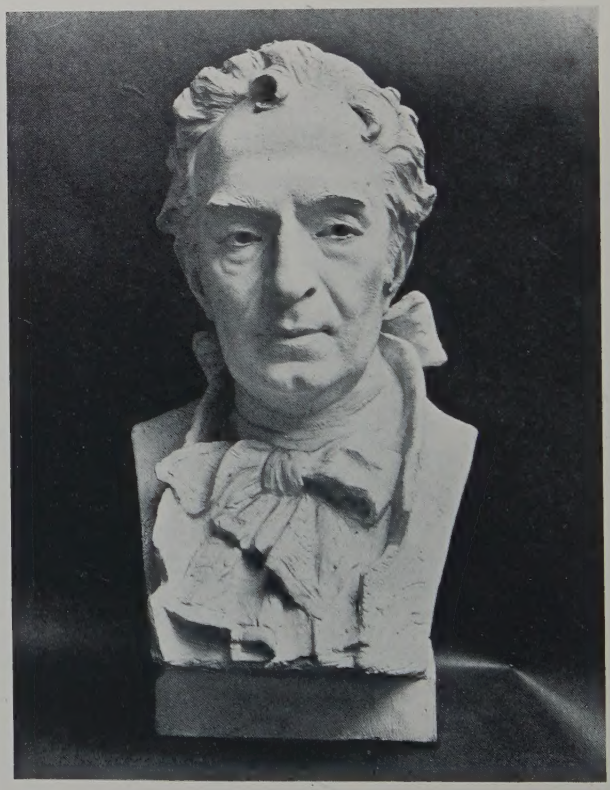
So was each portrait carefully selected for the powerful likeness of the sitter, or more especially the way in which it illustrates the genius of Stuart, whose claim to the title of being Rhode Island's greatest artist, has never been challenged and who justly may claim to be the greatest painter that the United States has yet produced.

For the student of Stuart's methods the exhibition contained much of interest. There were canvases to study as well as the well-known diagonally-tooled mahogany panels, which Stuart knew so well how to use and which gave him a surface to work on something like the English twilled canvas. Again there could be found examples of his genius in the handling of glazes, yet untouched by the work of the restorer, and so in their pristine beauty, merely wearing the patina which time gives.

His preference was apparently for heads upon which the emphasis was placed, with startling and brilliant realism. Full-lengths are the exception, hence the chance in Rhode Island to see and appreciate the two full-length portraits of Washington in the Providence and Newport State Houses is a privilege indeed. Painters have questioned his placing of the heads of his sitters on his canvases and found limitations in his treatment of costume and detail as

lacking in importance of interest; but perhaps he did so to form the attention of the spectator upon a rare portrayal of features, interpreted with the subtle touches of a genius. In this Stuart, the artist succeeded admirably, and the Exhibition just held in Providence paid abundant tribute to that fact.

The real success of the Stuart part of the Tercentenary Exhibition was due to the many kindnesses received by the Museum from fortunate owners of these treasures. Especially is the Museum indebted to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York who gave every possible assistance. Its many friends likewise helped in every way, among them being Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hail Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lewis Weiss, Mrs. Suydam Cutting, the Milch Galleries, Enrich-Newhouse and the John Levy Galleries of New York City.



GILBERT STUART, THE ARTIST by F. Edwin Elwell, 1858–1922

Lent by Pausacoco Lodge

L. E. Rowe

RHODE ISLAND SILVER AND SILVERSMITHS

IN celebration of the Rhode Island Tercentenary, the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design has recently exhibited a fine collection of silver comprised of more than two hundred pieces by forty-one makers.

The early silver made in the Colonies was generally wrought from coins—this being a method of retaining one's wealth, as identification was possible, if the pieces were lost. Much of the fine workmanship was preserved to us when beakers, cups, tankards, and similar silver were presented to churches to be used for Communion services. Many, however, were lost by the desire for more modern styles, and the melting pot dissolved the products of many early workers.

The leading early craftsmen were nearly all residents of Newport or King's County, now Washington County, and the first known silversmith to work in the state was Arnold Collins (w. 1690, d. 1735) of Newport. He was also an engraver as were many metal craftsmen, and was the one selected to engrave the Rhode Island seal. A tankard, the gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, Herbert Lawton and Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf is a fine example of the flat-topped lids with inserted coin. There was also a pair of sugar tongs of the scissors type with the maker's mark, AC within an oval, on the inside of each tip and lent by Mrs. John Ormsbee Ames.

There was no one more adept in his art than Samuel Vernon (1683–1737) of Newport. He had the distinction of being Rhode Island's first outstanding worker in silver, and there were many of his pieces—seventeen in all—on exhibition. An early example was a small caster or pepper shaker with a perforated, domed cover and scroll handle lent by Mrs. Ames, while a tankard from the Mabel Brady Garvan Collection lent by the Gallery of Fine Arts, Yale University, was of especial interest to Rhode Islanders. On the front of the body is engraved the Rhode Island seal depicting a foul anchor. In all probability it is one of three tankards made to compensate Lewis Morris, Jr. of Westchester, who, aided by Col. Isaac Hicks of Hempstead and Mr. James Jackson of Flushing, decided the controversy between Massachusetts and Rhode Island. At the meeting of the General Assembly in 1733 a "committee accordingly submitted their report to this General Assembly, that they were of opinion it would be consistent with the honor of this government and the merit of the said commissioners that three silver tankards be forthwith made each of £50 value, with the arms of the government to be engraven on them and one to be sent to each of the said commissioners."[1] In the will of Lewis Morris (1760) a silver tankard which was given to him by the Colony of Rhode Island was bequeathed to his son, Lewis Morris. Another choice piece by Vernon was a feeding cup with slender, curved spout at right angles to the strap handle. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the cup is the maker's mark. Vernon had an unusual one, SV above a fleur-de-lis enclosed within a heart, but here the silversmith has deviated from his usual device. It is comprised of his initials above a fleur-de-lis within a rectangle. This mark is impressed four times on the base of the cup which was sent especially for this Exhibition from London and was lent by Captain V. A. Watson through the courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum. This may possibly be a piece of early origin and one made before he adopted his usual mark. A paten, small in diameter and supported on a short standard spreading to the base, was lent by Governor Theodore Francis Green.

A spoon with a handle terminating in a trifid end was the only piece by Isaac Anthony (1690–1773), who worked not only in Newport, but also in Swansea, Massachusetts, and was from the Garvan Collection.

John Coddington (1690–1743), another early Newport silversmith, was represented by three pieces—two tankards and a cup.

[1] Rhode Island Col. Records, Vol. IV, p. 488-9.

The latter is bulbous with the lower section godrooned and his mark, IC within an emblem, is impressed twice on the body near the rim, while the tankards, one from the Garvan Collection and the other the gift of Mrs. Danforth, were very similar in shape with tapering sides and stepped and domed lids.

Two pieces, one a porringer and the other a spoon were questioned as to the maker. The mark, IT within a shaped shield, is attributed by Hollis French to James Turner (w. 1744, d. 1759) of Boston and Philadelphia, while J. Marshall Phillips, Curator of Silver at the Gallery of Fine Arts, Yale University, believes it to be that of John Tanner (1713–1785) of Newport. The pieces both from the Garvan Collection were originally owned in this state and may possibly have been by the Rhode Island silversmith.

A tobacco box, lent by Captain Watson, is oval in shape with the arms of the Parker family of Lancaster County, England, on the slightly convex cover, and is the workmanship of Benjamin Brenton, who was born in 1710 and worked in Newport. It has been suggested that this as well as the Vernon feeding cup may have belonged to a Tory, who at the outbreak of the American Revolution, returned to the Mother Country and took some of his choice pieces with him.

There were several porringers, a caster, one octagonal in shape with a perforated, domed cover, and a spoon, marked with the initials, DR within a bell, designating the work of Daniel Russell (c. 1750) a Newport craftsman of whom little is known.

An outstanding piece in the Exhibition was a flagon lent by the Cathedral of St. John of Providence. It is the work of J. Clarke (w. 1734) in all probability Jonathan, but sometimes known as James, a Newport silversmith. Two fine pieces from the Garvan Collection were a teapot, one of the inverted pear-shaped style, and a strainer with the inscription, *JABEZ BOWEN PROVIDENCE JANUARY 1766*, perforated around a conventionalized flower head similarly formed. Both of these pieces are impressed with the mark, CLARK within a cartouche. The identity of the maker has not been established, but there is a Newport piece impressed both with this mark and that of J. CLARK within a rectangle. It has been suggested that this mark may be that of J. Clarke, who later dropped the final letter of his name. The work is contemporary and equal in quality to the silversmith already established as a Newport craftsman.

William Davis Miller of Wakefield is the owner of many fine pieces of Rhode Island silver which have been on exhibition in the Early American Gallery for several years, and one of especial interest is a strainer for punch by Jonathan Otis (1723–1791) of Newport. The round bowl is perforated while two skeleton handles, the sides of which are formed of inverted scallops, spread from the bowl. The maker's mark, IO within an oval, is impressed on each handle.

Samuel Casey (c. 1724–c. 1773) of Kingston holds undisputed supremacy over the silversmiths of Little Rest. His career was brilliant, but tragic. Among the most outstanding examples of his work is a teapot, one with inverted, pear-shaped body, curved spout, and wooden handle. It is decorated with the arms of the Robinson family, while the initials, AR, those of Abigail Robinson, who afterwards married John Wanton, appear below. The lid is beautifully engraved with cherubs and leaf scrolls. The teapot is one of the finest examples of the art of this master craftsman and was lent by Mrs. Everitte St. J. Chaffee. An interesting pair of sugar tongs of the scissors type was lent by Mr. Miller. It bears the maker's mark, SC within an oval, with the letters in reverse, an error of the silversmith. Two cup-shaped beakers, the gift of Miss Mary Le Moine Potter in 1931, were very interesting pieces and almost identical with one lent from the Garvan Collection. Other outstanding pieces by this craftsman were lent by Mr. and Mrs. R. H. I. Goddard, Mrs. S. Foster Hunt, Mrs. Martin Knapp, and Mrs. Susan S. Rodman.

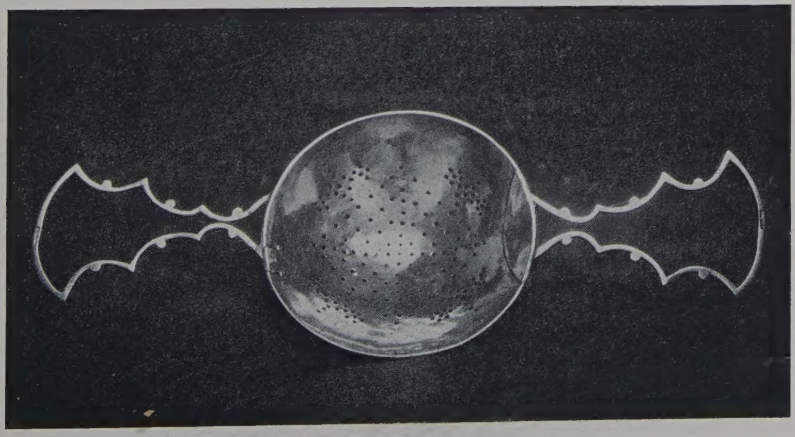
Another member of the same family, Gideon Casey (b. 1726, w. 1753), the brother of Samuel and also a silversmith of Little Rest was not the prolific craftsman his brother proved to be, nor did he equal Samuel's excellent style, although two spoons from the Garvan Collection very closely resemble similar spoons bearing the latter's mark. Gideon used a mark like that usually employed by Samuel, the first initial separated from the surname by two pellets.

There were a number of tankards in the Exhibition, and a fine one from the Garvan Collection is attributed to Joshua Doane (d. 1753) one of the early Providence craftsmen. It has the tapering sides interrupted by a mid-band, while the stepped and domed lid is surmounted by a finial.

A similar tankard by John Hancock (b. 1732), also a Providence silversmith, was lent from the Clearwater Collection through the courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

A very prolific Providence silversmith was Saunders Pitman (1732–1804), who provided many of the leading families with table services and flatware. At the time he worked, bright-cut decoration was used considerably to ornament the heretofore plain pieces and so in the various examples of teapots, creamers, beakers, and other wares, we may compare his undecorated pieces with those delicately ornamented with bright-cut borders. On two of the four beakers lent by the Beneficent Congregational Church of Providence, the inscriptions prove most interesting—one reads: "*This Cup replaces one given by Benjamin Cushing AD 1760 Which has been Stolen*," while on the other appears: "*This Cup replaces one given by Ebenezer Knight AD 1760 Which has been Stolen.*" Both beakers match two others bearing the inscription: "*2^{d} Cong^{l} Church Founded AD 1743.*" All four of them were probably made at one time, two to replace those which had been stolen. A charming teapot with bright-cut decoration was lent by G. H. Pickering in memory of Mrs. Henry T. Brown. There were a number of Pitman pieces, acquired by the bequest of Charles T. and Henry L. Aldrich and the gifts of William T. Aldrich and Miss Elizabeth D. Bugbee.

An interesting piece by a Newport



STRAINER by Jonathan Otis

Lent by William Davis Miller

craftsman, Thomas Arnold (1739–1828) was a saucepan with a gracefully shaped body which swells gradually to the base. The shaped lip is at right angles to the wooden handle inserted into a silver socket. This piece was from the Garvan Collection, while a pair of graceful sauce boats each mounted on three hoofed feet were lent by Mr. Miller.

John Waite (1742–1817), another silversmith of Little Rest, and one who probably learned his trade from Samuel Casey was also active in the war for American Independence and politics. For years he was in command of the Kingston Reds and was appointed Justice of the Common Pleas of Washington County and Justice of the Peace. Two pairs of sugar tongs by him were interesting for comparison. One pair was of the scissors type with his mark, JW within a rectangle, impressed on one handle, while the other pair more closely resembled those in use today. The arms are composed of a series of scrolls terminating in shell tips, while the maker's mark appears on each arm.

Two spoons each decorated with a shell on the back of the bowl were lent by Mr. Miller and were the sole examples of the work of Joseph Perkins of Little Rest. There is a possibility that he, too, was apprenticed to Samuel Casey. Not only was he interested in the art of metalwork, but was also a merchant and gunsmith. He was born in 1749 and died in 1789 and was the great-grandson of Governor William Brenton.

A silversmith said to have worked in Newport during the middle of the eighteenth century and to have advertised in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1765, was Thomas Coverly (c. 1750–1800). A graceful, jug-shaped can or mug owned by the Museum and purchased with the Mary B. Jackson Fund in 1929, was the only piece by this workman in the Exhibition. Since Hollis French lists him as a Newburyport silversmith, many people in possession of his wares may be unaware of the fact he ever worked in Rhode Island.

Another craftsman of the same period and town was Daniel Rogers (1753–1792). A can similar to the Coverly piece was lent by Maxim Karolik, while a porringer with the graceful, keyhole handle is the property of Hollis French and lent through the courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Often one who has been especially favored with unusual talent has been early deprived of his good fortune by death. Such was the fate of Nathaniel Helme (1761–1789), another member of the Little Rest group, and one who Mr. Miller thinks might easily have been a rival of Samuel Casey. Mrs. Ames lent a charming little porringer by him and bearing the inscription: "*Ester Powell from Gabriel Bernon.*" On close examination one can discern the difference in the type of script between the former name and that of the latter. Obviously "*from Gabriel Bernon*" was added years later by one interested in the fact that the porringer was presented to Ester Powell by this early French Huguenot settler in Kingston. Perhaps the porringer was wrought for Ester Powell, granddaughter of Bernon, by her son, Nathaniel, and again it may have been made for a lady of the same name, but not the mother of the silversmith. It seems strange that it should have been marked with her maiden name by her son.

A Newport silversmith of a slightly later date was Nicholas Geffroy (1761–1839) whose flatware—a ladle and tablespoon—lent by Governor Green, a porringer and sugar tongs from the Clearwater Collection and a beaker from the Garvan Collec-

VERNON MARK ON FEEDING CUP

tion exemplified the development of silver in Newport.

With the British occupation of Newport during the Revolution, the art of the silversmiths was transferred from the southern part of the state to Providence, and although craftsmen still worked in Newport, it no longer held first place in the art.

"In 1792, Ezekiel and William Burr carried on the business of Gold and Silversmiths, 'a few doors south of the Baptist Meeting House, and directly opposite Capt. Richard Jackson's.' "[2] These craftsmen were not distinguished in their work, but supplied many Providence residents with flatware. Ezekiel (1764–1846), whose portrait and that of his wife may be seen in the Museum Gallery, was represented by a creamer with a cone-shaped body mounted on a square base and embellished with bright-cut decoration. Among the pieces of flatware owned by the Museum were two tablespoons given by Harald W. Ostby in 1927. A teaspoon by William Burr was the only example of his work in the Exhibition.

Christopher Burr (d. 1824), a silversmith comparable to the others of the same surname, was represented by three spoons of various styles lent by Miss Amey L. Willson and Irving W. Davis.

A craftsman who had shops located at various places on North Main Street was once established in a building at the corner of North Main and Thomas Streets. He was Nehemiah Dodge, who worked in 1794. "He possessed great energy and activity, and the industry of a long life was crowned with success."[3] There were a number of pieces of flatware in the Exhibition, and two teaspoons by him match two by Saunders Pitman.

"John Gibbs carried on business on the corner of Westminster and Exchange streets. He was a charter member of the Mechanics Association, and a member of the committee of correspondence. He died October 6, 1797."[4] An interesting tablespoon bearing his mark and having a mid rib on the front of the handle, and shell and acanthus leaf decoration on the back of the bowl was lent by Mr. Davis.

John C. Jenckes (1777–1852), a Providence silversmith and apprentice of John Gibbs, was born on the Island of Rhode Island. After a few years of residence in Westport, Massachusetts, his family settled in Providence, where he learned his trade, and after the death of Gibbs, carried on the business with his widow until 1800, when the partnership was dissolved. "Twice in his life he narrowly escaped a violent death,—one by the falling of the bell, while attempting to save the organ of the First Congregational Church during the conflagration of that edifice, in 1812; and again, during the memorable gale in 1815, being the last person who crossed the bridge, a few minutes before it was carried away."[5] For fourteen years he held an office in the First Congregational Church and a similar position for nineteen years in the Westminster Congregational Church. The Museum owns two teaspoons, the gift of the Misses Alice S. and Eunice W. Dexter in 1932 and bear his mark.

A few pieces of flatware with the mark of Pardon Miller (d. 1800), a Providence craftsman were the sole pieces by him, although he is known to have made holloware.

A large spoon with bright-cut decoration and probably used for serving bears the mark, C. WHEATON within a serrated rectangle, and a question has arisen as to the maker since Hollis French lists both Caleb and Calvin Wheaton as silversmiths, while in Providence records, Caleb Wheaton was mentioned only as a clock maker and Calvin, a silversmith. Whether both were in the same work or whether one has been mistaken for the other is a matter of conjecture. In all probability the spoon was the product of the latter, who worked

[2] Mechanics' Festival and Historical Sketches:—Providence 1860, page 104.

[3] Mechanics' Festival and Historical Sketches:—Providence, 1860 page 104.

[4] Mechanics' Festival and Historical Sketches:—Providence 1860, page 104.

[5] Mechanics' Festival and Historical Sketches:—Providence 1860, page 70.

in 1790 in Providence, and was the bequest of Miss Jessie L. Coggeshall in 1926.

Stephen Williams was a partner of Nehemiah Dodge in 1799 on "Main street" Providence, but later he maintained his own shop nearly opposite the Governor Fenner home. One teaspoon with bright-cut decoration was the only example of his work in the exhibition.

A Newport silversmith, William Wood, who also worked in 1799, was represented by a tablespoon with a coffin-shaped handle. This type of spoon is said to have been presented at funerals, but without a doubt it is just another story which has arisen from the shape of the piece. The resemblance of the handle to the old coffin is striking and probably accounts for this legendary tale.

Two teaspoons, both decorated with bright-cutting, but differing in the shapes of their handles were wrought by Walter Cornell, who worked in Providence about the turn of the century.

There was a small mug, slightly barrel-shaped with a strap handle from the Clearwater Collection and marked, FELLOWS. Little is known of this silversmith—not even his Christian name—but it is thought he worked in Providence about 1800.

William Hamlin, who was born in Providence in 1772, was apprenticed in Middletown, Connecticut, but returned to his native city, where he entered business in a building on "North Main street, next north of St. John's Church."[6] There were a number of spoons and a ladle impressed with his mark in the Exhibition.

A creamer by Seril Dodge (w. 1795, d. 1802) of Providence was lent by Mrs. Elizabeth Babbitt in honor of Mrs. Sophia C. Harris Babbitt. Its urn-shaped body is mounted on a splay base—a type of creamer used during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Although it does not equal the workmanship of his predecessors, it is nicely wrought, and there is especial interest in the fact that it was made from buttons from the uniform of Esek Hopkins, commander in chief of the American navy. Seril Dodge "carried on business 'two doors north of the Baptist Meeting House.' He manufactured shoe buckles, and was successful in accumulating property. He built the, so called, 'Dr. Wheaton House,' and the 'Obadiah Brown House,' and it was jocularly said he 'paid for them in silver buckles.'"[7] He, also, was apprenticed in Connecticut to Mr. Harland of Norwich. After working in Providence, he moved to Pomfret, Connecticut, where he died in 1802.

There were two salt spoons with fiddle-back handles, embellished with shells at the tips and bearing the marks of George G. Clark (w. 1813), a Providence silversmith. They were lent, together with other flatware, by Mrs. A. Utley Wilcox.

A creamer and sugar bowl by George Baker (w. 1825) are very ornate in style and show a revival of the richly decorated ware. The bodies are godrooned and mounted on oval bases while the handles are decorated with leaf scrolls. Both were the gift of Miss Fanny Fiske Hasbrouck in 1922, while a tablespoon of the fiddle-back handle was given by Dr. Jeannie O. Arnold in 1919.

FEEDING CUP by Samuel Vernon

Lent by Captain V. A. Watson

Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum

[6] Mechanics' Festival and Historical Sketches:—Providence 1860, page 104.

[7] Mechanics' Festival and Historical Sketches:—Providence 1860, page 104.

Two teaspoons of early nineteenth century style represented the work of Elnathan C. Brown, of whom little is known except that he lived in Westerly.

B. H. Tisdale (c. 1825) and Gorham & Webster (w. 1831), whose flatware made more than one hundred years ago in Providence closed the period of silver in the Exhibition. The Gorham Company still maintains the standard established during the past century.

With such excellent silversmiths as founders of the art of metalwork in Rhode Island, one cannot wonder that our state leads the country in this craft.

D. N. Casey

SECRETARY by Job Townsend

Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, 1936

EARLY NEWPORT FURNITURE

THE furniture of early America, reflecting the simplicity of life as necessitated by the demands relative to the moulding of a new world, was not elaborated upon to any extent until well into the eighteenth century. By this time business had begun to prosper and with accumulating fortunes came extravagant living. Houses, once small and compact, became capacious with ornate woodwork decorating the interiors. Ceilings, at one time low, finally reached such heights as to easily accommodate the tall highboys and secretaries beneath them.

Newport at this period was a thriving community, and from its seaport captains set forth to return in due time with cargoes of mahogany from the West Indies. The demand for this wood was great because Newport, sharing honors with Philadelphia, was then one of the two greatest furniture centers in this country. Much has been said of the Newport cabinetmakers and their purported products, but the ties connecting them leave much to be imagined as little furniture has been found bearing the names of makers. From the evidence thus far reported, it would seem that John Goddard was the master craftsman. He did, however, marry into the Townsend family, several members of which followed the same trade. Among them were Goddard's father-in-law Job Townsend, a maker of repute, and John Townsend, the son of Job's brother Christopher. Job has been recognized as the first of the clan to be particularly ingenious in certain architectural details which were later used by Goddard. The former was born in 1699 and apparently worked in Newport until the time of his death in 1765.

In the Tercentenary Exhibition recently held in the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design, there was shown a mahogany secretary, page 25, bearing an original label reading: *Made by Job Townsend in Newport* and the recent gift to the Museum of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth. It is of the early flat-topped variety with arch-

paneled doors and ogee bracket feet. The interior of the desk compartment is beautifully executed in its arrangement of pigeon holes and drawers embellished with concave shells. The label appears on the inside of a door in this section. Also, a covered well in the desk floor allows one access to the top drawer. All of the drawers are carefully dovetailed and each has two shoes or strips of wood attached to the bottom at the sides thus facilitating the renewal of the worn parts. The partitions of the cabinet have interesting shaped edges and are widely enough separated to accommodate several books in each section.

SECRETARY by John Goddard

Lent by Mr. Arthur B. Lisle

Of the activities of John Goddard,[1] a little more is known. He was born in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1723/4, but

[1]See Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. XV, No. 2.

lived in Newport where he was to gain the fame that today characterizes him as one of America's greatest cabinetmakers and where he died in 1785. It was undoubtedly Job Townsend who taught Goddard the rudiments of furniture making and his technique of construction reflects this contact especially in the shoeing of the drawers. Characteristics which perhaps most definitely establish Goddard as the maker of certain types are the blocking, the large and well designed shells, the scrolls on the ogee bracket feet and the slender spiral finials. Having counted among his patrons several wealthy Providence men who would undoubtedly have engaged in all kinds of business transactions, Goddard found the secretary very much in demand. The Museum was privileged to show three very beautiful ones in the recent exhibition. One of them, lent by Messrs. Brown and Ives, is the secretary mentioned in the inventory of Joseph Brown, its original owner, and said to have been made about the time of his marriage in 1759. Through the investigation of some letters, exchanged between Goddard and Moses Brown in 1763, the fact became known that Goddard had made furniture for members of the Brown family and also for prominent men such as Jabez Bowen and Governor Stephen Hopkins.

When unauthenticated pieces have Goddard characteristics their owners naturally conclude them to have been made by him. However, John Townsend's label appears on a chest of drawers which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and which is almost identical in design with furniture known to have been made by Goddard. Thus, the problem of differentiating between them seems almost futile where there is no documentary evidence to substantiate claims of origin. The Brown and Ives secretary is very beautiful with its block front and shell decorated doors, writing-leaf, and top drawer, the latter unit, ornamented, being an unusual feature in a secretary. The moulded scrolls of the top terminate in rosettes and the outer two of the three flames rest on what appear to be large boxes, this illusion being obtained by continuing the sides and applying the moulding of the cornices. The ogee bracket feet have the usual blocking and scroll, but the interior of the desk compartment is quite plain being without carving or blocking.

Another secretary, page 26, of this type, owned by Mr. Arthur B. Lisle, bears the inscription *Made by John Goddard in 1761 and repaired by Thomas Goddard in 1813.* Thomas was the son of John and like his father engaged in furniture making. The color of the mahogany is somewhat darker in this piece and it is without the shells on the top drawer, and without the boxes under the flames. The interior is, however, very beautifully wrought much in the manner of the Job Townsend secretary. An unusual leaf ornament instead of the scroll appears on the foot.

The third of these handsome secretaries came from the Marsden J. Perry Collection, but is now the property of Mr. Maxim Karolik. In feeling, it is more like the Lisle piece reflecting many of the same mannerisms both inside and outside. Unfortunately, small triangular areas at some time have been cut from the surface of the upper sections of the doors, but this does not materially affect the appearance.

A highboy said to have been made about 1760 was lent by Mr. John Nicholas Brown. Evidence of its Goddard origin was strengthened by the investigation of its purchase by Perry Weaver, Goddard's son-in-law, at an auction. The top closely resembles those of the secretaries, but claw and ball feet terminate the cabriole legs, and a pendent shell decorates the skirt. The highboy was of course evolved from the low chest with hinged cover. At first one, then two and finally three drawers were added until the chest cavity became so high that it was practically useless. After this, cases of drawers were set on frames and called highboys beginning with the flat-topped, six-legged variety and finally, after many stages of development, arriving at the elaborate types akin to Philadelphia.

A splendid chest-on-chest was the only representative of its kind and is the property of Mr. Norman Herreshoff. In it are embodied all of the traits peculiar to Goddard at his best and it is of the rich dark mahogany that he seemed to feel was requisite to the complete beautification of his products. The chest-on-chest was obviously an outgrowth of the highboy and held sway for some time.

Through the courtesy of Mr. R. H. I. Goddard, we were able to show a mahogany tea table said to be a duplicate of one made for Jabez Bowen, undoubtedly by John Goddard, and now owned by Mr. H. F. du Pont. This attribution seems a logical one since in his correspondence Goddard mentioned a tea table that he had made for Mr. Bowen. The rectangular top has a shaped and moulded edge and the cabriole legs, decorated with carved leaf motifs, terminate in claw and ball feet.

A clock case of Goddard design was lent by Mrs. Benjamin Barker. It was originally owned by the late Mr. Barker's great-grandfather Richard Jackson, who served as a Congressman from this state about 1800. The finials, shell decoration and feet are the telltale marks which indicate this origin. The works were made by Caleb Wheaton[2] who was flourishing in Providence in 1788. It seems very probable that tall case clocks were, as a rule, installed on stairway landings where they could usually be seen from either floor equally well.

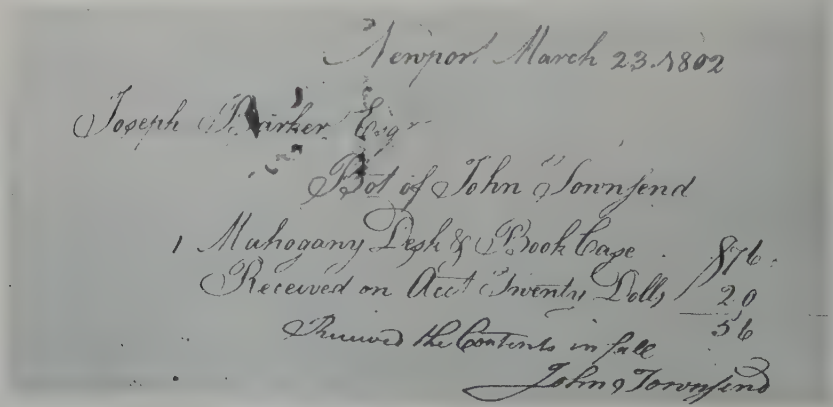
Goddard is credited with having made almost all types of furniture. Adding variety to the exhibition is a bed lent through the courtesy of the Estate of Miss Mary Edith Powel. It was one of a pair made for Capt. Dennis and was purchased by Miss Powel's father about 1873. In her inventory, Miss Powel wrote of having seen Goddard's original bill of forty dollars for each bed and also stated that the applied brass ornaments were later added at her request. The foot posts are spirally ornamented and fluted, while the legs are square with fluted sides.

A knee-hole desk or bureau table,[3] the gift in 1933 of Miss Mary Le Moine Potter, is convertible in that the front of the top drawer is hinged allowing it to be dropped for use as a writing leaf. On the front are the usual three shells and blocking.

Of similar proportions and design was a low chest of drawers lent by Mr. William Greene Roelker. While in aspect this has every right to be called Goddard, it is very similar to the piece bearing the label of John Townsend previously mentioned.

[2]See Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. XXIV, No. 1.

[3]See Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. XXII, No. 4.


Newport March 23. 1802

Joseph Barker Esqr

Bot of John Townsend

1 Mahogany Desk & Book Case . . . 8/6.

Received on Acct Twenty Dolls 20

Rec'd the Contents in full 36

John Townsend

Signed receipt of John Townsend

Hence, it is very difficult to draw any definite conclusions inasmuch as both men worked in Newport and undoubtedly together.

A desk also owned by Mrs. Barker was said to be the work of John Townsend (1730–1800) on the strength of the following bill of sale:

Newport, March 23, 1802

Joseph Barker Esq^{r}

Bot of John Townsend

1 Mahogany Desk & Book Case	$76
Received on Acct Twenty Dolls	20
	56

Received the contents in full
John Townsend

This document was in the handwriting of two people but the last line and signature were without doubt by the hand of Townsend as was also

John Townsend
Receipt which appeared on the
$76

back. When the compound usage of desk and bookcase was employed the implication was that of one piece, whereas, there is no sign that the desk ever had any superstructure. Also, the style would indicate an earlier date than 1802. This evidence would seem to refute that particular claim, although the desk appears to be of Newport origin and may very well have been made by Townsend at some earlier period. This would also indicate a discrepancy in the death date of Townsend as given by a furniture authority.

Refinement and restraint of design were the distinctive features of the Newport school. A desk exemplifying this type is one lent by Dr. Niles L. Ek. The interior is similar in many respects to both the Job Townsend and Goddard pieces and the shoeing of the drawers is the same. The wood is, however, of lighter color than that usually employed by Goddard and there is no exterior carving as in most of his pieces. An interesting note has been found on the inside of the door where, faintly scratched, is the name *John Goddard 1754*. It would seem that this might have been done by an early owner rather than by the maker as he would undoubtedly have taken a more conspicuous way of perpetuating his name. A feature about which there might be some controversy is that of the writing-leaf supports. Instead of having the usual flat fronts, the pulls are ornamented with carved swan's heads which seem not to be in accord with the design of the desk as a whole. However, they may have been incorporated at the instigation of someone whose fancy demanded such devices. It is a meritable piece typifying the grade of work done in Rhode Island in the eighteenth century.

Lent by Mr. George Watson Hall Smith is a secretary the writing section of which is especially representative of early Newport work and in its fine blocked and shell decorated interior resembles four other desks in the exhibition.

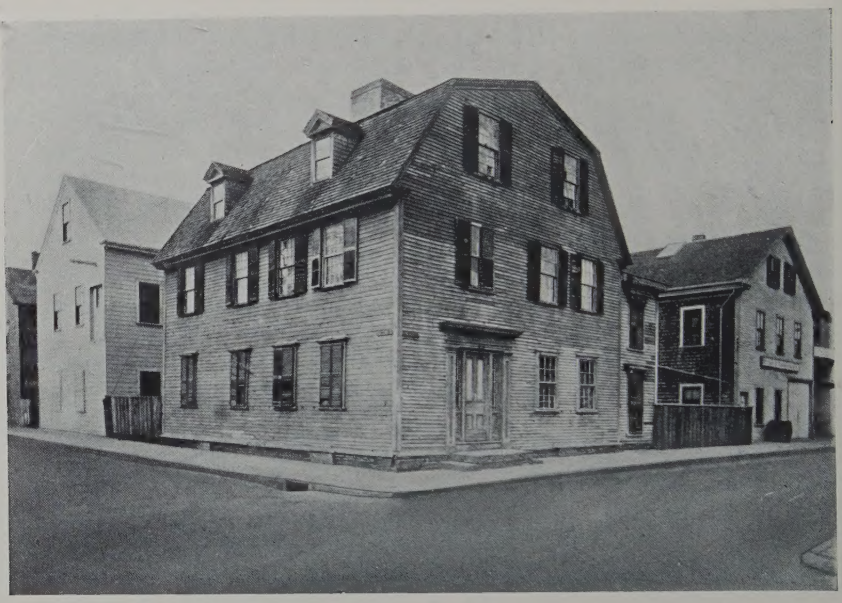
Among the loans of Governor Theodore Francis Green were four mahogany side chairs of a pattern common to Rhode Island. Each is of the transitional type having a shield-shaped top rail and slightly curved stiles the continuations of which form the back legs. The carved design of the back splat is composed of a festooned urn symmetrically arranged with flowers.

We can, indeed, but express our gratitude to those through whose courtesy the assemblage of so worthy a collection was made possible for thus students of Americana have been enabled to study pieces, seldom, if ever seen, within the portals of our Museum.

E. T. Casey

On the cupola of the National Gallery, London, is the legend:

"The works of those who have stood the test of ages, have a claim to that respect and veneration, to which no modern can pretend."



HOUSE OF JOHN GODDARD

Formerly on water front, Washington Street, Newport, R. I.

THE LIBRARY

Among the recent accessions to the Library are the following:

Agard, W. R.—The new architectural sculpture. 1935.

Albertolli, Ferdinando.—Fergi trovati negli scavi el foro Trajano. 1838.

Barton, Lucy.—Historic costume for the stage. 1935.

Bible. Old Testament.—Old Testament, il. by J. James Tissot. 2v. 1904.

Bowditch, C. P.—Mexican and Central America antiquities. 1904.

Byne, Arthur.—Majorcan houses and gardens. 1928.

Calderini, Emma.—Il costume popolare in Italia. 1934.

Chiari, Alessandro.—Pitture a fresco di Andrea del Sarto e d'alteri celebri autori. 1840.

Child, Theodore.—Wimples and crisping-pins. 1895.

Contenau, Georges, 1877– La civilisation phénicienne. 1926.

Dimand, M. S.—A guide to an exhibition of oriental rugs and textiles. 1935.

Fagnani, Emma.—The art life of a XIXth century portrait painter. 1930.

Farris, E. J.—Art student's anatomy. 1935.

Ferriss, Hugh.—The metropolis of tomorrow. 1929.

Fischer, Ernst.—Svenska möbler. v.l. 1931.

Fridlander, E. D.—Matthew Maris. 1921.

Fry, G. W.—Embroidery and needlework. 1935.

Hartford, Conn. Wadsworth Atheneum, Avery and Morgan memorials. Three centuries of Connecticut furniture. 1935.

Hayden, Arthur.—Chats on royal Copenhagen porcelain. 1918.

Hinks, Roger.—Carolingian art. 1935.

Hoak and Church.—Masterpieces of architecture in the United States. 1930.

Hoke, C. M.—Testing precious metals. 1935.

Jeny and Volbach.—Germanischer schmuck des frühen mittelalters. 1933.

Jenny, Wilhelm von.—Keltische mettalarbeiten aus heidnischer und christlicher zeit. 1935.

Jonge, C. H. de.—Holländische möbel und raumkunst, von 1650–1780. n.d.

League of Nations.—International institute of intellectual cooperation. Division of museums. International study conference, Madrid, 1934. Muséographie. 2v. 1935.

Leloir, Maurice.—Histoire de costume, de l'antiquité à 1914. v.9. 1934.

London. Royal academy of art.—Catalogue of the international exhibition of Chinese art. 1935.

Loukomski, G. K.—L'art decoratif russe. 1928.

Maccari, Enrico.—Il palazzo di Caprarola. n.d.

Macfall, Haldane.—The book of Lovat. 1923.

MacKey and Sooy.—Early California costumes. 1932.

Mason, F. H.—Ship model making. 1935.

E. CHASE

PORTRAIT OF DOROTHY WILLING by Gilbert Stuart

Lent by Mr. & Mrs. Frank Hail Brown

Included in the Stuart Exhibition

Bulletin of the

Rhode Island School of Design

Providence

All communications should be addressed to the General Editor, Mr. L. Earle Rowe

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